

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CHICAGO CUBS AND WHITE SOX LOCAL NEWS
COVERAGE DURING THE 2004 AND 2008 MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL
SEASONS

This research paper explored how the media presented information about the Chicago Cubs and White Sox during the 2004 and 2008 seasons. This was accomplished through content analysis from sports sections of both, *The Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Sun Times*, totaling 167 articles containing 2,777 paragraphs. This analysis measured quantity and tone of news coverage with cross-comparisons between two teams, two years and two news sources.

Each paragraph was assigned to one of the teams and categorized into a pre-determined coding group. These coding groups were classified as positive, negative, or neutral in tone. This study sought to identify whether significant agenda-setting or framing differences existed between the Chicago Cubs and Chicago White Sox and how this differences could have impact on object salience. The theories of agenda-setting and framing will provide insight into the decision making process of sportswriters as to: how much information of each subject is being presented (quantity), and how the story is presenting the subject (tone).

The Cubs received a slightly higher amount of coverage than the White Sox for the entirety of the study. However, as total coverage decreased, from 2004 to 2008, the majority of which was in coverage for the White Sox. Thus, suggesting an agenda-setting function in this particular area of the study.

Both the White Sox and Cubs received more neutral coverage, than positive or neutral frames. The remained constant to the study, with the exception of the Cubs in the year 2008, where they received a significant amount of positive coverage as opposed to their 2004 season.

This paper sought the theories of framing and agenda-setting beyond their popular reach in the political world by applying them to sports writing, a previously untapped discipline.

Brent Marini
Summer Semester 2009